

THE QUIVER

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"But you should care, for my sake."—p. 34.

IN DUTY BOUND.

BY THE AUTHOR OF "MARK WARREN," "DEEPPDALE VICARAGE," "A BRAVE LIFE," ETC. ETC.

CHAPTER VII.—SHADOWS ON THE HEARTH.

THE next few days Horace abandoned himself to all the joys of home. If he thought of his own affairs at all, it was seldom, and in a cursory manner. If, now and then, the old misgiving

haunted him, and judgment whispered that he had been precipitate, he silenced the whisper, and laid the misgiving to rest.

Ruth was charming. She excelled even his expect-

tations. She was so loving, so tender, so playful, so thoroughly contented with her home, so like to the ideal he had pictured, that nothing seemed wanting in his cup of felicity. To be sure, his domestic arrangements were not so perfect as could be wished; but time would work wonders. Only time was wanted!

On Sunday he went to church with his bride. He was very proud of her indeed. He thought his friends must see and admire her perfections as he did. He felt sure that they would, one and all, pay their respects to her on the following week, when Ruth, having made her appearance, was to sit for company.

He took a great deal of trouble to explain matters to her on the Monday morning, as they sat at breakfast; for Ruth failed to view things exactly in the right light.

"Now, Ruth, you must know that there are some people in East Bramley whose acquaintance we must cultivate."

"I hope the Mudfords will call," said she, balancing her spoon on the rim of her cup.

He frowned a little. He had not desired any further acquaintance with the Mudfords.

"They are the only people I care about," said she. "I don't know anybody else in the place."

"But, Ruth, don't you see I am trying to get a connection? And the Mudfords are not exactly— Well, of course, they can call," added he, remembering the kindness of the ironmonger's wife to Ruth in the hour of her distress; "but there are the Eastons."

"Oh, that proud, stuck-up Miss Easton! I can't bear her!"

Horace frowned again.

"And there is Mrs. Jules, who is quite an old friend of mine. I am particularly anxious that she should continue to be on terms with me. I want Mrs. Jules to like you, Ruthy."

"I don't much care whether she does or not."

"But you should care, for my sake," said he, reproachfully.

"And I hate having formally to receive company. You know how nervous I am. I shall run away, and shut myself up."

"That will be very foolish, Ruth. I beg you will do nothing of the kind."

The nearest approach which he had yet seen to a pout appeared on the smiling lips of Ruth.

"I have very important business at the office this morning—I cannot neglect it," he continued; "but I will be back as soon as possible. If any one comes while I am away, you will entertain them, Ruth."

"I suppose Jane knows what to do," said Ruth, as she got up, and went to the window. "I am sure I don't."

"About what?" asked Horace, alarmed.

"About the wine and cake, and things. I have

never received company before, or been with any one either. I don't know!"

He stood a minute, a look of blank dismay on his face. Then he said, "We don't leave these things to servants, my dear."

She shrugged her shoulders with a touch of impatience.

"If you will come with me, Ruth, we will arrange matters a little. What is all that litter on the drawing-room table?"

"Those are the wax flowers I am making."

"You are resolved to make them, then?" said he, in a tone of surprise.

"I don't see why I should not."

There was a touch of self-will in her voice and manner which jarred upon him. But he controlled himself; he was very patient with her. He cleared away the litter, set out the bride-cake and the wine, and gave all the requisite orders, wondering very much at the strange position in which he found himself.

Then, he went to his office, for he was late, and punctuality was important. He ran all the way. He had a strange sinking at his heart. He had left her sitting at the window, smiling and lovely. The little cloud had vanished almost as soon as it came; but yet his heart sank—but yet his judgment said clearly now, and not in a whisper—"You have married in haste." He would not allow the sentence to be finished—"How if you should repent at leisure?"

His business matters were very protracted that morning. He could not get away till late. He felt anxious and worried—home cares mixed with those of a business nature. Already the shadow of a great burden was coming upon him.

As he was hurrying home, to his great surprise he met Ruth. She came up smiling, and looking all sweetness and amiability.

"Why, Ruth, I thought you were at home, expecting people to call. Pray, has there been any one?"

"Oh, yes; but I got so tired! Mrs. Mudford came."

"Anybody else?"

"The Mortimers."

He looked vexed. These Mortimers were friends of the Mudfords.

"Was that all?"

"Oh, no; a lady in a grand carriage. Not Miss Easton."

"Mrs. Jules?" said Horace eagerly.

"Yes, she came; but I was frightened, and told Martha to say I was engaged."

"Ruth, you never mean to tell me you did anything so foolish and so wrong?"

"I can't help it"—and there was the touch of self-will again—"it's how my aunt did, when she did not want to see any one."

"But when you know Mrs. Jules is my friend—

"Oh, Ruth, Ruth! what have you done?" cried he, in a tone of distress.

She walked on, smiling and unconcerned.

"And who else have you sent away?" he asked bitterly.

"No one, only Miss Easton. She came a few minutes after. I was more frightened at her than at Mrs. Jules. She was driving her ponies."

He did not speak. He looked very stern, and very angry.

"So you have offended two of my best friends, and altogether forgotten your good manners!" said he, as they reached the door of their house.

She looked up with one of her brightest smiles. His words did not affect her in the least.

"I told you I did not want any friends but you," she said tenderly.

For once the smile was lost upon him, and the tenderness as well.

CHAPTER VIII.

ADELA'S PRAYER.

"PERHAPS I have been too selfish and worldly. Perhaps this is an appeal to me to make some sacrifice for others. I could dispense with the matter altogether. It will be a thorny path at best. But for my duty?"

Adela thought it, as she stood, in her room, endeavouring to regain her composure. She had a high sense of duty, which was well. By degrees, a holier principle might be felt, which would make the path of duty easier and pleasanter.

"If you please, Miss Easton, the master is calling for you everywhere," said a maid, as she tapped hastily at the door. "There's a carriage in the drive now."

Adela opened the door, and stepped hastily into the corridor to meet her father.

"Adela, this is not usual with you. The guests arriving, and no mistress to receive them!"

He was a handsome man in spite of his age. His figure was tall and stately; he had even a military air; but he had never been in the army. He had been the owner of a mill.

Adela murmured a hasty excuse; and he offered her his arm, as they walked down the corridor. He had a stiff and stately courtesy, which distinguished him at all times. The common people used to call him "Gentleman Easton." Adela would have liked a few moments more of retirement; her mind felt confused and stunned; but it was not to be thought of just then. She had barely time to receive her guests.

She was not happy. How could she be? Her heart was not here, amid this flutter of laces and rustling of trains. It was far, far away! Happily, her self-control was not easily shaken, else she had made a bad hostess that night. She was

heartily glad when the entertainment was over. She had her father's iron constitution, and scarce knew what weariness meant; but the effort to keep up under the pressure that was upon her mind was hard work; her head ached. She longed to sit quiet in her room, and think over what she would have to do.

It was of no use discussing the matter with her father that night. Her plans were not matured, and the hour was too late. She rarely risked anything by precipitancy. She did not attempt to go to rest as usual. She sat in her room, her hand pressed to her forehead, and in deep and anxious thought.

What right had one sister to all these comforts and luxuries, when the other wanted bread? The very fact of how sumptuously she was lodged and fed pained her, when out in the bleak world, friendless, and perhaps homeless, was Margaret!

She would like to take Margaret's child to her heart. People said it was a cold heart, and proud. Certainly, it was a heart which had neither given nor received much tenderness at present.

Her father was polite, but never tender. She had no bosom friend who was as her own soul. She held aloof from the circle of acquaintance who fluttered round her. In her secret life, she was often solitary and unsatisfied. There was no trace of this to be seen—but there it was.

A little infantile creature to cling to her, and be loved and cherished. Her sister's child—of the same flesh and blood with herself. Something that she could shelter and defend, and perhaps save. She would have liked this.

She would lose no time in laying the matter before her father. She would ask him the very next morning if she might adopt Margaret's child. It was a daring question, and she could hardly guess the result. But there was a kind of intrepidity in Adela's nature, and it would stand her in good stead.

She rose early—indeed, her anxiety would not let her sleep. She had armed herself at all points.

The breakfast-table was never enlivened by much conversation. Mr. Easton was of a silent, reserved habit; and he had his letters to read, and also the *Times*.

When the meal was over, and the table had been cleared, Adela's hour had come: it was now or never. While she thought so, her father rose and threw away the paper.

"I must go, Adela. I wonder if my horse is ready. I ordered it to the door at nine."

"Going—where?" asked Adela, somewhat anxious and alarmed.

"To meet Sir Frederic Morton, at Bolton Gate. He wants me to ride over that piece of land with him. I shall, perhaps, bring him back to lunch."

Adela was standing. She laid her hand on the back of the chair. "Can you spare me a few minutes?" she asked; "I wish to speak to you."

"I am in a hurry, Adela. Keep what you have to say till I come back."

"Our clock is fast, and I will not detain you long. When you return it will be too late."

"Indeed! what is it then?"

He was standing opposite to her. They were looking full into each other's faces.

"I have seen Margaret."

She said it so calmly, in such a steady voice, that the whole import of the words did not occur to him.

"Whom have you seen, Adela?"

"Margaret—my sister, and your daughter."

A moment longer he stood silent and unconvinced. Then a dark threatening expression came into his face—an expression that Adela had never seen before. But she was not dismayed; she stood her ground. The courage of her nature rose in proportion to the demand made upon it.

"Have you then dared—" he began, but she would not hear him finish.

"I have dared nothing but what my relationship to Margaret justifies. Do you know that she is a widow, and in distress?"

"And if she is, what right have you to know it?" said he, vindictively.

Adela's eyes met his eyes steadily. She never quailed an instant.

"Yesterday a woman, poorly dressed and in want, came and asked to see me. I could not have believed it, but, papa, that woman was Margaret."

"Ah, I told her that she would want bread!" cried he, still vindictively.

"She did not ask for money. I offered it, but she refused," replied Adela calmly.

"What did she come for?"

"To ask a favour of me. I wish to grant it; my heart urges me powerfully. But I have always been obedient—I cannot do it without your consent."

The closing remark somewhat pacified him. He told her she was right. Indeed, he said a few words in praise of her dutiful behaviour.

"You flatter me," replied she, "by your good opinion. Well, then, my wish is this: I wish to adopt Margaret's child."

Adela was very plain-spoken. She had a habit of coming to the point at once. In this case the effect was rather startling. He looked at her as if he could not rightly have understood her meaning.

During the momentary calm, she went on her way steadily, and without regard to what might come hereafter. "Margaret has come to us from a depth of poverty and wretchedness, such as we can scarce imagine possible for one of our race, our own flesh and blood. She will return to it. Heaven help her! We may never see or hear from her again. But the innocent child, who is too weak to struggle as she must struggle, who has done us no ill, and only suffers for the faults of others—may I not rescue it?"

I am willing. I hold out my hand. It may be, papa, we shall both of us find our dying pillows easier, if we do not suffer this little one to drift away from us and perish!"

Adela had full knowledge of her father's disposition, and used the knowledge skilfully. He liked the expression, "suffering for the faults of others." It implied that blame might be attached to Margaret; and he was pleased that Adela did not offer herself as champion for her sister. He did not war with a child; he had no feelings towards it of any kind; added to which, the allusion to his last hour sobered his irritation. The stern man of the world had an untold dread of death. "You must give me time, Adela," he said, in a softened tone. "I must consider the matter."

"I have no time to give you," she replied; "the mother goes to-day. She is in some poor lodging where she slept last night. You forget that she must labour for her bread."

"It is her own seeking. She has made her own fortune," he replied coldly, "and I will not hear her name. I have told you so before."

"You shall not," said Adela calmly; "we will speak only of the child."

Her resolute manner and steadfast eye held him to the point, in spite of his reluctance. It was his own nature reflected in hers. It was as well, he thought, to decide at once. He was prompt as she was. It would not take him long. She might leave him for half an hour, and return.

She left him, softly closing the door after her. She went to her room, and shut herself in. With all her outward calmness, she was deeply agitated. Her soul yearned to her sister's child. How empty and frivolous her life seemed to have been, now this new interest had come! How tender were the thoughts suggested to her mind! What a fountain of affection was opened up in this arid spot!

She could not save both. Alas! the mother had drifted too far away. Perhaps, if she were to try, both would be lost. But if she took the narrow path of duty, the other blessing might perchance be added. It was the beginning, not of evil, but of good.

And in the deep consciousness of want—want of a better wisdom, and strength, and persistence than her own—and in a consciousness, too, of new and untold perils and responsibilities, she fell on her knees and prayed. It was the first earnest, heart-felt prayer she had ever offered.

CHAPTER IX.

WHY SHOULD NOT SHE MARRY?

SHE was summoned back to her father sooner than she expected. He was standing just where she left him. He had not moved, she thought, an inch.

It was a crisis in Adela's history; one she had come upon suddenly, and without the slightest expectation. Who would have thought this yesterday?

She advanced with a firm step. When she was opposite her father, she laid her hand again on the back of the chair. She waited for him to speak first. When he did speak, his voice sounded very harsh.

"I have considered your proposition, Adela. Before I give my decision, may I ask if you have weighed well the consequences of the step?"

"I have," she replied, firmly.

"Suppose you should marry?"

"It is not likely," said she, coldly.

"I see no reason against it, at your age, and with money and position——"

"We will not discuss that point," she interrupted. "I am willing to run the risk."

"You are? Well, it is no concern of mine. I do not want you to marry."

She was silent.

"But I will not have the child forced on me. You must keep it out of my sight."

"The house is large enough," she replied.

"And—that woman—must not come on any pretext whatever. If I find that she does, I will send the child to the workhouse.

"Very well, sir, she shall not come."

"I think I may trust you, Adela?"

"I think you may."

"And you will never mention to me—her—her name—or hold the slightest communication with her?"

"I will not mention it. I will hold no communication."

"And whatever happens to you—whether change, or sickness, or death—I refuse to undertake any responsibility. The child's welfare depends on you, and you alone. I would turn it out as easily as I would crush an insect."

She shuddered. His harshness was very terrible; and to oppose it would be to chafe against the sharp edges of a rock.

"The child itself may die," said she aloud, a moment after.

"So much the better. It may be taken from the evil to come."

She could not bear it much longer—the tears gushed to her eyes. If his heart was adamant, hers was human. A sword would hardly have pierced it as his words did.

She turned as if to go. He had given permission. What need was there to stay any longer? He did not stop her. He waited till she was gone, and then rang the bell and ordered his horse.

He was late at his appointment, and yet he rode slowly—in fact, he had half a mind to turn his horse's head and ride back again. He had done a very silly thing, and one which he already wished undone. Why should not Adela marry? The idea had never struck him with such force before. How handsome she had looked as she stood opposite to

him! And she was rich. No girl in the county would have a better portion.

He had wished both his girls to marry well; and he ground his teeth as he thought of Margaret. Now he had only Adela left, and he would take care of her.

Why did he let her fasten that clog round her neck? He ought to have forbidden it. The child would never be claimed, and he gave a short bitter laugh. It was not likely; and Adela—something told him that she was not the woman to forsake a trust. There was a stern fidelity about her that was ominous.

He would ride back at once. But, no, that was impossible without breaking his word to Sir Frederic, and Sir Frederic was yonder riding to meet him.

He was not alone; Mr. Sibley, his agent and confidant, was with him.

"Sir Frederic began to think you late," said Mr. Sibley, as the gentlemen met and exchanged civilities.

"Oh, dear! he is the soul of punctuality."

"I was detained," replied Mr. Easton, casting a cold, slight look on the agent; "but I am now quite at your service."

"And very valuable it is to have such a friend and adviser," continued the agent, in a fawning tone. "I was just saying to Sir Frederic——"

"The fact is," said Sir Frederic, breaking through his agent's speech, with a cheerful, manly voice that was pleasant to listen to—"the fact is I am just a wee bit bothered, and I was sure you would advise for the best."

"That I will," replied Mr. Easton, heartily.

He liked the young baronet thoroughly. He liked his frank open countenance and clear grey eyes, and straightforward honest manner.

It was impossible, he thought, to be deceived in a face like that. The agent he detested, and he was not alone in that feeling.

"The case lies in a nutshell," continued Sir Frederic. "You see that sweep of land, those fields, and that pretty homestead yonder; you could not have a better view anywhere than from here."

"I see. The land that belongs to the Ormonds——"

"They rent it," interrupted the agent, hastily.

"I thought it was their own. I thought the old man, their father, left it them in his will. But I really know very little of my neighbours' affairs."

"He did leave it them," continued Mr. Sibley; "and, oh! do just mark the wickedness of mankind. He knew it was not his own to leave. It was Sir Frederic Morton's."

"How came that about?" asked Mr. Easton.

"It was part of the Morton estate, but the late lamented baronet mortgaged it—the Ormonds choose to say sold it to them—at any rate they refuse to give it up. My respected patron——"

"There—there—that will do!" cried Sir Frederic, cutting him short.

"Because, don't you see," continued the agent, not in the least abashed by the rebuke, and still addressing Mr. Easton—"don't you see how beautiful it is with the rest of the estate? It is a gem missing from the crown!"

"It is a nice bit of land—very," said Mr. Easton, approvingly.

"So it is, and it ought not to be separate from the rest. I tell Sir Frederic that for the sake of his descendants he ought to claim it; and I really think he will."

"Buy it, you mean," suggested Sir Frederic.

"But if the young people refuse to sell it—'As firm as an Ormond,' has passed into a proverb here," insinuated the agent.

"I know very little of these Ormonds," said Mr. Easton, in that cold, distant tone he assumed when speaking of strangers. "Pray who, or what are they?"

"Two very nice young people," replied the agent, to whom the question was addressed, "very nice, indeed," and he mouthed the words as if he was talking of a sugar-plum.

"Husband and wife?"

"No, brother and sister. They have just lost their father, and their mother died years ago. In fact, they are orphans."

"Which makes me resolve to do them every justice," said Sir Frederic gravely, and almost sadly. *(To be continued.)*

THE GOOD SHEPHERD CONTRASTED WITH HIRELINGS.

JOHN X. 11.



JESUS calls himself the Good Shepherd, and he does so by way of contrast with other shepherds—"All that ever came before me were thieves and robbers; but the sheep did not hear them."

But to whom does Christ put himself in contrast? The prophets who had foretold him as the gentle shepherd who would carry the lambs in his bosom—these could not be called thieves and robbers, for they had one and all pointed the sheep to the fold.

There were others besides the prophets who had taken upon them the religious instruction of the people, and who had been reproached for their neglect and their ignorance. The people in our Lord's time excited his compassion because they were "as sheep not having a shepherd," and yet "the scribes and Pharisees sat in Moses' seat." Well they merited the censure—"thieves and robbers"—who, with such authority, yet suffered the sheep to go unfed. Nor was Christ striking out a new course when he thus censured the professed guides of the people. To the watchful student of the Bible, nothing is more remarkable than the conservatism of our Lord's teaching. He speaks a truth which startles at first; but, on reflection, you find that it is a truth which Old Testament teaching had declared.

And so it is in this passage: his audience were not unintelligent men, utterly unacquainted with the contents of the Old Testament. They were men—many of them, at least—who prided themselves on their minute knowledge of the sacred oracles; and the words of Christ must have forcibly brought to their minds the bearing of Zech. xi. When they heard him speak of the hireling shepherds who deserted the flock, and

of the good shepherd who giveth his life for the sheep, they must have remembered the shepherds that "pitied not" the flock (Zech. xi. 5), and the shepherd who would feed the "poor of the flock" (Zech. xi. 7); or, in other words, they must have perceived that Christ intimated the fulfilment of this prophecy in himself—that by him the "idol shepherds" who had neglected, or despised, or forsaken the flock, were to be cut off—that henceforth the feeding and care of the flock should be in the hands of the shepherd whom God had ordained. But in this chapter of Zechariah there is a curious passage which announces the cutting off of shepherds, and specifies their number as three—"Three shepherds also I cut off in one month; and my soul loathed them, and their soul also abhorred me."

Considerable difference of opinion seems to prevail about the right interpretation of this passage. Some are willing to believe that the three shepherds are the three kinds of guides appointed to the people of God—the prophets, priests, and kings; others have wished to individualise the prophecy; and these see in the three shepherds either Moses, Aaron, and Miriam, or the three Maccabees, or else the three Asmonean princes, Hyrcanus, Alexander, and Antigonus. But if Christ is the shepherd who is to feed the flock, and to supplant the negligent hirelings, we must look for the three shepherds, whose power is to give way before his, at the period of his coming, and amongst those who either violently or by reason of divergence of teaching, opposed the mission of our Lord. This consideration leads us to incline to the view of those who interpret these three shepherds as typifying the three sects which exercised influence over Jewish thought during our Lord's life on earth—the Pharisees, the Sadducees, and the Essenes.

These three sects are each of them representative of certain tendencies of human nature, and against these tendencies the Good Shepherd warns his flock. The teaching of Christ, though it acknowledged good in everything, maintained that evil also lurked in everything, and was directly opposed, therefore, to the evil tendencies of these three sects. And if we mistake not, when our Lord describes the characteristics of his pastoral care, he gives the antidotes to these three evil tendencies. It will be well, therefore, for us briefly to note the particular features of these three sects.

I. The Pharisees, taking their rise (as is supposed by some) about 200 years before the Christian era, were minutely jealous of the letter of the law; but their devotion to the letter of God's law did not prevent their asserting its insufficiency, and this insufficiency they supplemented by a mass of oral tradition, enjoining numerous rites and ceremonies. These observances they insisted on with even more energy than they did on the precepts of the inspired word; and not only so, they in many instances made the oral tradition the sole interpreter of the written word. We can readily see, then, that the word of God was made of none effect by their tradition. From the mass of these rites and observances there developed itself, as a natural product, the belief that the most rigid observer of them had the greatest claim on divine favour, or, in fact, the belief in "works of supererogation;" and this receives additional force when we recollect that their reliance on Jewish privileges was so great, that they seem to have held that God was bound to bless the Jews, and could not in justice consign any one of them to perdition. The external privilege of being a Jew they held to avail for salvation. What claim must therefore be theirs who, being Jews, yet scrupulously observed the traditions of the Rabbis?

And the teaching of Christ could not fail to disturb the position of the Pharisees. While they rested their confidence on the privilege of being Jews, Christ taught that if they were Abraham's children, they would do the works of Abraham. While they flattered themselves that they were fulfilling more than the law of God required, Christ declared that they had forgotten the weightier matters of the law—judgment, mercy, and the love of God. While they were looking forward to the chief seats in the kingdom of God, Christ was warning them that there was no necessity that the Jews should be saved; for that God was able of the very stones to raise up children to Abraham, and that "many should come from the East, and from the West, and the North, and from the South, and should sit down with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, in the kingdom of God, but the children of the kingdom should be cast out into

outer darkness, where should be wailing and gnashing of teeth." They were the cleansers of the outside of the cup and of the platter—the champions of the efficacy of external rites. Christ taught the necessity of inward purity, as St. Paul did afterwards: "He is not a Jew, which is one outwardly; neither is that circumcision, which is outward in the flesh: but he is a Jew, which is one inwardly; and circumcision is that of the heart, in the spirit, and not in the letter; whose praise is not of men, but of God" (Rom. ii. 28, 29). They were the advocates of the *opus operatum*—the place, the rite, the minister were everything. Christ taught the truth and the spirit as the needful conditions: "The true worshippers shall worship the Father in spirit and in truth: for the Father seeketh such to worship him" (John iv. 23).

II. The Sadducees, believed by some to be the most ancient of these sects, proceeded on a principle totally different from the Pharisees. Where the Pharisees sought to multiply obligations, and burdens, and traditions, the Sadducees sought to diminish, and exercised their ingenuity in denying everything. While the Pharisees were sustained in their conduct by their unbounded veneration for tradition, their confident expectation of future reward, their firm reliance on their descent, the Sadducees sought to cast away all these supports. Tradition was nothing to them, for God had given them reason, and they needed not to bind themselves by man's decrees. Future rewards or punishments they denied, as being mere undesirable bribes to human integrity; and they deemed it inconsistent that God should have ordained them. The duty of man found its chief expression towards his fellow-men. To be honourable, upright, and just in the civil and social relations of life—this was religion. Of religious feeling, of yearning towards the great Father of all, they knew nothing.

These were bad shepherds—hirelings after all—under whose charge the sheep would be scattered. But Christ's teaching was opposed to this. While he taught men of the boundless love of God, he did not shrink from warning them of the dangers of unbelief, and the fearful consequences of dying in their sins. While he enjoined honest and liberal dealing between man and man, he reminded them of the duties they owed to God; of the turning of the whole heart towards him. While he bade them "love thy neighbour as thyself," he reminded them that the first and great commandment was, "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy strength;" and even hinted at the subtle connection which subsisted between these two commandments, the second only deriving its strength from its likeness to the first.

The Sadducees were intellectual; and, hand in

hand with their intellectualism went their hard and meagre morality. Christ, without deposing the intellect, taught a creed which was eminently spiritual and sufficient to satisfy the deepest religious emotions of man.

III. The Essenes. While the Pharisees and the Sadducees were dividing the numbers and the intelligence of Judæa, the principles of a third sect were making themselves felt. The religion of the Pharisees was too formal; that of the Sadducees was too intellectual. True religion does not consist in outward act, nor in intellectual apprehension, but in deep spiritual communion; that abstraction from the world and its cares which enables man to unite his spirit to the great Spirit of the universe. Such a view seems to have led the Essenes to seek a secluded life, and gradually the truth which underlay their error became distorted into monstrous shapes.

As the truly religious ought to have no will but God's, said they, so he must seek to abandon all that savours of the exercise of his will. He resigns himself totally into God's hands without a desire. Even the strong love to the Creator, as it expresses desire and will, must be laid aside. Really to become acquainted with God, there must be total immunity from passion. A sublime apathy is the best preparation for the reception of God. God then, when the soul lies perfectly passive, is mirrored there; nay, the soul rises into assimilation with God, and loses its identity in the fulness of Deity. The body, as it is possessed of instincts and passions, is the gross prison-house of the soul. From this the Essene pants to get free, to leave the earthly tabernacle for ever in the dust, and to become absorbed in the Divine Spirit. The body was accordingly despised and neglected, and all occupations which were calculated to awaken the passions, war, and commerce, were forbidden. This tendency to isolation, to an existence so necessarily useful, the teaching of Christ opposed. Recognising as he did most fully the strong spiritual cravings of mankind, and supplying them with the fulness of a divine love, he yet laid down the social and the practical character of Christianity. Withdrawal from the world to hold converse with God, he himself had practised when he went to the mountain-top to pray; but it was only to whet the weapons, to buckle on the armour, to nerve the courage for the conflict against the world. The isolation which he enjoined, was to be seen in the marks of the believer—the fruits of faith—the love to the brethren—the jealousy of obedience—the manifestation of their religion in the sight of men. "Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven."

With all of these then—Pharisees, Sadducees, and Essenes—the teaching of Christ contrasted

strangely; and in this contrast consisted his superiority as the spiritual guide of human kind—as the Good Shepherd. These sects were but thieves and robbers. The Pharisee robbed religion of its reality—of the dependence of man on God, by making man lean on external forms: the Pharisee robbed religion of its faith.

The Sadducee robbed religion of all the prospects which gild the grave—the bright immortality of bliss: the Sadducee robbed religion of its hope.

The Essene robbed religion of the power of circulating her benefits. By his isolation and refusal of lawful callings he deprived religion of the power of ameliorating man's condition and tempering every lawful calling: the Essene robbed religion of its charity.

But Christ, as the Good Shepherd, restored all. The Pharisee recognised only the outward decencies of religion, and ignored altogether the hidden knowledge of God in the soul on which the Essene dwelt so fondly. Christ teaches that there is this hidden knowledge—that a mysterious bond holds his sheep to him. "I am the Good Shepherd, and know my sheep, and am known of mine." And these sheep are not the self-sufficient of any one nation, but the sheep which are scattered abroad throughout the whole world. "Other sheep I have which are not of this fold: them also I must bring, and they shall hear my voice."

The Sadducees thought only of integrity before man, but forgot righteousness before God, and the severity of his judgment. Christ tells us of the putting away of the guilt of the world before God. "The Good Shepherd giveth his life for the sheep."

The Essene thought that by abstracting himself from the world, by lying passive in the hands of God, he would attain to the sweets of divine food and the realisation of heavenly life. Christ tells that through him alone can this sustenance and this life be found: "I am the door; by me, if any man enter in, he shall be saved, and shall go in and out and find pasture. . . . I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly." And thus Christ showed himself the Good Shepherd—better than the hirelings.

But it is not with Jewish sects that we have to do; it is with men now living, to whom Christ ought to be the Good Shepherd. These Jewish sects are not however to be dismissed, as though we had nothing in common with them. On the contrary, they are only representative of the evil tendencies of human nature, which are to be seen, not in Judæa alone, but everywhere, and which can be corrected only by the tender care of the Good Shepherd.

We are prone to regard every ordinance of religion as possessed of a self virtue, independent



(Drawn by LOUISA TAYLOR.)

"We have garlands made

From the spoil of the skylark's home."—p. 45.

of our own spiritual co-operation; to regard each means of grace as a viaticum to heaven; to rest on privilege and diligence in religion, and not on Christ. This is the Pharisaism of religion.

We are prone to look upon intellectual apprehension of truth, or the vigorous exercise of our understandings—perhaps the perverted exercise of them—in reducing truth to the proportions of our own fancy, as the rational and lawful religion. This is the Sadduceism of religion.

We are prone to dwell entirely on the ebb and flow of our emotions; to be constantly gauging our spiritual state by the thermometer of our religious affections; to be continually creating for ourselves novel standards of spiritual obligation, instead of "ruling ourselves after God's word." This is the Essenism of religion.

Christ the Good Shepherd supplies the corrective to these. There are the limits of the sheepfold, within which, let the Pharisee narrow or reject as he please, the sheep will be safe. There are the sweet tones of the Shepherd's voice,

which, let the Sadducee ignore as he will, the sheep know and love to hear. There is the call to the hearty exercise of mind and the charities of life which the Essene seeks to evade.

He is the good shepherd who does not mutilate his flock; who, controlling, directing, and restoring man's faculties, does not dwarf and deform them; does not disturb their order or their harmonious proportion; but in converting the heart, honours the ordinances of God in the economy of man's being; so that the mind discriminates, the conscience decides, the imagination paints, the memory instructs, the desires rise, and love constrains:

"That mind and soul, according well,
May make one music as before,
But vaster,"

and this, because it is only when Christ rules that the chords of man's being are struck aright. It is only when the Good Shepherd guides that the sheep lie down in green pastures and beside the still waters. W. BOYD CARPENTER, M.A.

WITNESSES FROM THE DEAD.

BABYLON.



AMONG the most clear and direct testimonies of dead and disintegrated cities to the truth and inspiration of ancient prophecy, not the least full and emphatic is that of Babylon. This celebrated empire arose about 750 years before the birth of Christ, and fell a prey to the victorious arms of Cyrus about 200 years after its rise.

We find Isaiah, at least 150 years before its downfall, predicting its doom with an explicitness and fulness such as places the evidence of the inspiration—or the imposition—of the prophet within reach of the most ordinary reader. "Behold, I will stir up the Medes against them, which shall not regard silver; and as for gold, they shall not delight in it. And Babylon, the glory of kingdoms, the beauty of the Chaldees' excellency, shall be as when God overthrew Sodom and Gomorrah. It shall never be inhabited, neither shall it be dwelt in from generation to generation: neither shall the Arabian pitch tent there; neither shall the shepherds make their fold there. But wild beasts of the desert shall lie there; and their houses shall be full of doleful creatures; and owls shall dwell there, and satyrs shall dance there."

C. J. Rich thus writes: "I found the whole face of the country covered with vestiges of building; in some places consisting of brick walls surprisingly fresh; in others, merely of a vast succession of mounds of rubbish, of such indeter-

minate figure, variety, and extent, as to involve the person who should have formed any theory in inextricable confusion. The ruins consist of mounds of earth formed by the decomposition of buildings, channelled and furrowed by the weather, and the surface of them strewn with pieces of brick, bitumen, and pottery. The people of the country assert that it is extremely dangerous to approach the mound after night, on account of the evil spirits with which it is haunted. There are many dens of wild beasts in various parts, and in most of the cavities are bats and owls."

But the prophet is still more circumstantial in his predictions. He names the conqueror before he was born, and minutely details the successive steps he was to take in order to accomplish the destruction of so great and so strongly fortified a city. "Thus saith the Lord to Cyrus, whose right hand I have holden, to subdue nations before him; and I will loose the loins of kings, to open before him the two-leaved gates; and the gates shall not be shut: I will break in pieces the gates of brass, and cut in sunder the bars of iron: and I will give thee the treasures of darkness, and hidden riches of secret places, that thou mayest know that I, the Lord, who call thee by thy name, am the God of Israel" (Isa. xlv. 1—3).

Herodotus and Xenophon record that Cyrus turned the course of the river Euphrates, which ran through Babylon; marched his army along the empty channel during a dark night, while the princes and nobles were celebrating a grand festi-

val on a scale of unwonted splendour, and the invading army finding the great gates which opened on the city from the river wide open, entered without opposition. Advancing to the royal palace, they slew the guards whom the king sent out to ascertain the cause of the noise which he heard; and after they had thus opened the two-leaved gates, the soldiers of Cyrus rushed into the palace and slew the king, his princes, and his nobles; and so fulfilled to its minutest and most circumstantial detail the inspired prophecy of Isaiah.

Jeremiah specifies the exact time that should elapse to the destruction of Babylon: "When seventy years are accomplished, I will punish the King of Babylon, and that nation, saith the Lord, for their iniquity, and will make it a perpetual desolation."

In describing the method of the capture of Babylon, many years before, Jeremiah adds fresh details to those given by Isaiah. "Babylon is suddenly fallen and destroyed." "How is Sheshach taken! and how is the praise of the whole earth surprised!" Herodotus, the heathen historian, totally ignorant of the prophecies of Isaiah and Jeremiah, states, "The Persians took them by surprise; they who lived in the extremities of the city were made prisoners, while those living in the centre of the place, ignorant of this, were dancing and feasting."

Jeremiah writes, long before the event: "The mighty men of Babylon have forborne to fight, they have remained in their holds: they became as women. One post shall run to meet another, and one messenger to meet another, to show the King of Babylon that his city is taken at one end." (Jer. li. 30, 31.) History records that the Babylonian soldiers, fearing to encounter the troops of Cyrus, shut themselves up in their retreats—i.e., "remained in their holds." The messengers ran from the opposite sides of the city, at each of which the invaders penetrated—for at one side the river entered, and at the other made its exit—and did "meet one another;" and the intoxicated rulers, unequal to the emergency, perished amid the ruins they had made no effort to avert. "They drank wine, and praised the gods of gold, and silver, and brass, and iron, and wood, and stone."

Babylon sunk every succeeding year, in spite of the exertions of Darius and others to restore it. The ruins only of this great city still exist, eloquent witnesses to the truth of the Word of God. Babylon cries from her grave: "Holy men of old spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost." "Wild beasts of the desert," and "doleful creatures," are the chief inhabitants of "the beauty of the Chaldees' excellency."

Lieut.-General Chesney, in a manuscript which the late Dean Goode was allowed to copy, presents

the most recent and reliable portrait of the present condition of Babylon:—

"Nowhere have I seen the desolating effects of time so vividly brought before me as when gazing on the remains of this once mighty city; and the realisation of the prophet's words, 'Babylon the Great is fallen,' recur to the mind with thrilling force. The eastern side of the ruins of Babylon presents an uninterrupted monotonous line, of a pale blanché brown colour. The first of these ruins, called by the Arabs 'Babel,' has the appearance of a massive fort, with a tower at each angle. It is an immense pile of unbaked brick-work, having a square superficies of 120,000 feet, and a height of only 28 feet. It was probably the basement on which stood the citadel. I was searching for the tunnel described by Herodotus as having passed under the ruin, when I came upon an arched subterranean passage, constructed of bricks and bitumen, leading to an apartment or pit. It passed for 'the den of lions,' and was evidently the retreat of those animals, one of which I had seen prowling about the ruins a day or two before. The Arabs refused to enter this subterranean passage. I explored it for some distance, but was deterred from penetrating to the end by the strong odour of wild beasts.

"About five miles south-west of Hillah the most remarkable of all the ruins, the *Birs Nimrud* of the Arabs, rises to a height of 153 feet above the plain, from a base covering a square of 400 feet, or almost four acres. It was constructed of kiln-dried bricks in seven stages, to correspond with the seven spheres—their respective colours corresponding with the planets to which they were dedicated—the lowermost black, the colour of Saturn; the next orange, for Jupiter; the third red, for Mars; and so on. These stages were surmounted by a lofty tower, on the summit of which we are told were the signs of the Zodiac and other astronomical figures, thus having 'a representation of the heavens,' instead of 'a top which reached into the heavens.' This I believe to have been the original temple of Belus. It was restored by Nebuchadnezzar, whose name it bears on the bricks, and on the cylinders deposited at its angles.

"It seems clear to me that this ruin came within the limits of ancient Babylon, which, according to Herodotus, embraced an area of 120 stadia, or fourteen miles each way."

To this fresh and most interesting narrative, so minutely justifying Scripture prophecy, by personal and very recent evidence, General Chesney adds:—"It is remarkable that hundreds of owls and numerous jackals dwell among the ruins of Babylon. Babylon is altogether deserted. The Arabs regard the place with superstitious dread."

There arose, afterwards, a succession of ardent

exertions to restrain the increasing desolation, and, if possible, reinstate the city in all its former magnificence, which event after event either entirely neutralised or turned aside. After its subjugation by Cyrus, it became a tributary city. Under Darius, the height of the walls was considerably lowered. Alexander the Great made an effort to recall to it its departed magnificence and imperial glory, so that it might become the metropolis of a universal empire; but the Macedonian conqueror died during the experiment. Susa, Persepolis, and Ecbatana were preferred by the Persian kings, and Greek and Persian finally forsook the fated city, falling capital. The waters of the Euphrates have spread over the ruins, and left nothing visible except the memorials of desolation predicted in the prophetic page.

God said of the Great Temple, the ruins of which are so vast and widespread around, "I will make thee a burnt mountain." Rich writes: "There are immense fragments of brickwork converted into solid, vitrefied masses." Mignan, in his "Travels," quoted by Keith, says they seem "scathed with lightning." Keppel states: "They are completely molten—a strong presumption that fire was used in the destruction of the tower."

In the denunciation of Babylon, fire is particularly mentioned as an agent against it. To this Jeremiah alludes when he says it should be as when "God overthrew Sodom and Gomorrah," on which cities it is said the Lord rained fire and brimstone. Sir Robert Ker Porter writes: "I draw the conclusion that the consuming power acted from above, and that the scattered ruin fell from some higher point than the summit of the present standing fragments. The heat of the fire which produced such amazing effects must have burned with the force of the strongest furnace; and from the general appearance of the cleft in the wall, and these vitrefied masses, I should be induced to attribute the catastrophe to lightning from heaven."

Buckingham writes: "The fallen masses bear evident proof of the operation of fire having been continued on them as well after they were broken down as before."

"The whole view of Babylon," writes Sir Robert Ker Porter, "was particularly solemn. The majestic stream of the Euphrates, wandering in solitude like a pilgrim monarch through the silent ruins of his devastated kingdom, still appeared a noble river, under all the disadvantages of its desert-tracked course. Its banks were hoary with reeds, and the grey osier willows were yet there, on which the captives of Israel hung up their harps, and refused to be comforted. But how is the rest of the scene changed since then! At that time

those broken hills were palaces; those long undulating mounds were streets; this vast solitude filled with the busy subjects of the proud daughters of the East. Now wasted with misery, *her habitations are not to be found*, and for herself *the worm is spread over her*."

If ancient prophecies relating to empires, and cities, and dynasties that have passed away, have been so minutely and so exactly fulfilled—witnesses rising from the beds of rivers, from broken columns, from scattered ruins, from the deep places of the earth, and attesting each with its deposition in its hand, the exhaustion in history of the minutest announcement in prophecy—we may with certainty expect that those predictions which refer to events yet future, and phenomena not yet within our horizon, will be fulfilled and justified by events no less complete.

God is in prophecy predicting before the time the things that shall be hereafter, and God is in history bringing to pass the predicted events as they are translated in succession into actual history.

This gives us a rather humbling appreciation of the world's greatest men. They appear and fill up the programme sketched a thousand years before, achieving, as they believe, grand results by the force of genius, but really, and as seen from the stand-point of prophecy, executing unconsciously and unintentionally, but entirely and in every jot, the will and purposes of Heaven. They are not creators, but executors; they are not the sculptors, but the chisels in the hand of the Great Sculptor of all things. What seems to us, from our narrow point of view, conflicting forces, are found at the end to have been co-operative. What we heard as broken and discordant crashes, are woven into the grandest harmony. Out of ruins God is constructing a glorious empire. From what man does in order to achieve his own selfish ends, the Great Ruler of heaven and earth is extracting evidence of his wisdom and elements of his glory. Day by day we discover how poor is all that man calls great, and how enduring is the least that God pronounces true. When that grand consummation, still future, shall arrive, to which all past events have been contributing from distant ages, and from different sources, and in whose glory they shall all be crowned and glorified, we shall discover how petty were our views, how unreasonable our doubts, how shallow our difficulties, how poor and unworthy our solutions, and how "glorious in praise, doing wonders," is that God who has "done all things well." We too, in harmony with a redeemed universe, shall join in the magnificent anthem, "Great and marvellous are thy works, Lord God Almighty; just and true are thy ways, thou King of nations."

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ROAD tracts of meadow and moor,
 With copse and woods between;
 Blue depths in the ether pure
 Of the firmament serene;
 And the breath of the day in the trees
 Is singing a sweet "hush song,"
 While the note of the bird has failed
 by degrees,
 As the noontide creeps along.

Down by the verge of the stream,
 All through the grass and the heather,
 Brightly the flowers gleam,
 Closely they lie together;

For Love, as the Herald of heaven,
 Hath blazoned the earth with its hue—
 With the golden clouds of its even,
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Come! we have garlands made
 From the spoil of the skylark's home;
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THE LUCKY SIXPENCE.

BY JOHN G. WATTS, AUTHOR OF "PICTURES OF ENGLISH LIFE."



NOT many years ago, from one of the poorest houses in the poorest quarter of the great city of Wealthandwant, a little boy was to be seen going forth every morning at precisely the same hour. He was a very little boy, and not more than eleven years of age. The clothes he wore were quite threadbare, though never ragged, and he had a piece of faded crape around his cap. His face was pinched as from want; but there was a clear, intelligent look in his eyes that told you, however humble his position, he had no coarse, ungainly spirit. If my readers could have followed Maurice—for such was the name of our young friend—they would have seen that directly he left home he always hurried away to a lane by the waterside almost as dim as the court he had left behind, and step with timid air into the dark passage of an old-fashioned house, from whence he would presently return with tears in his eyes, and a face, if anything, paler than before.

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After the stoppage of her income, the poor woman set to work to try and earn bread for herself and children, for she had a daughter as well as son, though the former was quite a baby, not a year and a half old indeed, and had never yet gladdened its father's eyes. She soon found her earnings far too small for their wants, was compelled to take Maurice from school, and remove from comfortable apartments to a single room up a dark court, in the most out-of-the-way part of the City. The boy had to take care of the girl while the mother was at work, and fulfilled his task most lovingly, never neglecting his little charge for an instant. Though so ill paid, the labourer was hard worked, and, in spite of every effort, could not obtain sufficient food to support her children properly, not to mention herself. Want and grief at last rendered her utterly incapable of doing anything, or even quitting her room. The people in the house, not much better off than herself, performed what little kindnesses lay within their

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poor woman went her way, assured in her own mind that she should never see her dear husband again in this world. At length fresh news did come, but only to strengthen the supposition of the loss of all hands. Then the broken-hearted creature, putting on a widow's habiliments, hung her head still more, and would not be comforted. Our hero, though he kept up as well as he was able before his mother, often when alone had his fits of deep anguish. Yet he never gave up the idea that his father was still living, and every night and morning—ay, and many times in the course of the day—sent up a simple, trusting supplication to the golden throne of Eternal Love, that the missing one might in mercy soon be restored to the loving breast that was yearning with undiminished affection for him.

After the stoppage of her income, the poor woman set to work to try and earn bread for herself and children, for she had a daughter as well as son, though the former was quite a baby, not a year and a half old indeed, and had never yet gladdened its father's eyes. She soon found her earnings far too small for their wants, was compelled to take Maurice from school, and remove from comfortable apartments to a single room up a dark court, in the most out-of-the-way part of the City. The boy had to take care of the girl while the mother was at work, and fulfilled his task most lovingly, never neglecting his little charge for an instant. Though so ill paid, the labourer was hard worked, and, in spite of every effort, could not obtain sufficient food to support her children properly, not to mention herself. Want and grief at last rendered her utterly incapable of doing anything, or even quitting her room. The people in the house, not much better off than herself, performed what little kindnesses lay within their

reach, and the ladies of a benevolent society regularly called with relief; and but for them the unfortunate family must have perished outright.

We said in commencing that Maurice was to be seen going forth every morning at the same hour, and making straight for an old-fashioned house near the waterside, which he entered, and presently returned from, evidently dashed in spirits. In that house the merchants in whose service his father had sailed, occupied an office; and his motive in calling upon them was to inquire if aught further had come to their knowledge concerning the missing crew. The invariable "Nothing" sent him away with tears of disappointment, for he clung steadily to the idea that one day they would have joyful intelligence for him. Seeing his mother's utter helplessness, our brave lad felt that he ought to make some effort towards, at all events, earning his own living. So one morning, after calling upon the ship-owners, he summoned up courage enough to walk into a store where a ticket declared that a lad was needed, and offer his services. The gentleman spoke kindly to him, but told him he was too small. Emboldened by the gentle manner in which he had been treated, he resolved to make inquiries about the City, and see if he could not get employment of some kind or other. He could read writing pretty well, and he felt sure could run errands with any boy. Alas! wherever he offered himself, the same reply assailed him. For several days did he prosecute his endeavours, till at last he had met with so many rebuffs that he began to despair.

Having on one occasion been refused in terms unusually cruel, the poor fellow could not contain his feelings, and quitted the store sobbing aloud. Seeking an out-of-the-way corner, he gave full vent to his grief. After awhile he was able to hold up his head again. To his surprise he beheld a neatly dressed old woman looking down upon him, her motherly face filled with pity.

"Why are you so sad to-day, my man?" said she.

"Because," he returned, "I have no father, and my mother is sick, and I have a little sister, and I cannot get to earn any money to help buy them food. I am sorry I am so little, for if I were a big boy I should soon be employed."

"You're a brave fellow," observed the old woman, "for thinking so much about these at home. Your father is dead, you say?"

"No, no! Mother thinks he is. Father was a sailor. He went a voyage a long while ago, and the ship was lost, but I think father will come back. God can do anything, and so I think he will send father to us some day."

"Poor child!" sighed the stranger, "you are quite right. Now do you know that although I am a very poor woman, yet I think I can help you; and I love sailors, for my dear departed husband was one. Though you are not big enough for very hard work,

yet you are big enough to sell things. Now, here is a lucky sixpence, which I have worn round my neck on this piece of ribbon a long while. I will give it you. It is the only coin I possess, but I can spare it, for I live in an alms-house just outside the City, where I have food and fuel provided me. I call it a lucky sixpence, because it was the first profit I made when I was set up, by some friends, in a small business on the death of my good husband, years ago." While the old woman was talking, her hands were busy unstringing the coin. "You must go to the market-place," she continued, "and buy a sixpenny nosegay; that divide into twelve bunches, such as you see selling about the streets, and offer them to passers-by at a penny each. If you sell them all, you will be a gainer by sixpence, and have taken your first step to fortune."

The dame proffered the coin, but Maurice let it slip through his fingers, and away it rolled. His eyes, however, were sharp, so catching it while yet on its course, he turned to thank his benefactress, but, to his wonder, she had vanished. Filled with new hope, he flew to the market-place, and soon changed his cash for flowers. He then turned into a corner, and with a piece of bass, which he had just picked up, speedily manufactured twelve little posies, wonderfully neat, considering his inexperience. The cast-away lid of a basket caught his eye. He ran, took possession, and, with quickening pulse, arranged thereon his bunches, and went forth.

"What a surprise for dear mother!" thought he, as he hastened to the Exchange, a place where flower-boys were always to be found. His first attempt to solicit custom was an utter failure, for when he tried to say, "Please buy a bunch of flowers," his tongue refused to move, and his heart thumped against his side, as he had never felt it before. His next effort was more successful, but even then he spoke so low that nobody heeded him. By degrees his tone improved, and at last he managed to make himself heard, and was pleased to find one or two gentlemen turn and look towards him. No sooner did he begin to attract attention, than a mob of flower-boys came thronging round and ordered him to be off. The frightened child turned to tell them about his sick mother and little sister, but that only brought down their jeers and laughter, and then one boy, bigger and more savage than the rest, with a blow of the fist, sent the poor fellow's flowers flying. Maurice dropped upon the flags, and scrambled together his property as fast as he could, and after sundry cuffs and pushes, managed to escape. Having re-arranged the somewhat damaged blossoms, he began again to solicit custom. Nobody, however, purchased. Made desperate by the thought that if they were not soon disposed of they would be worth nothing, our young salesman called louder than ever, "Who'll buy my flowers?"

At last, one young man, of whom he had begged

very hard, put his hand into his pocket, drew out a penny, and was about to choose a bunch; but no sooner did he perceive their condition, than, with a half angry toss of the head, he cried, "Oh, what's the use of that rubbish!" and hurried on. Maurice fell back as if he had been shot. He gazed sorrowfully upon his goods. They were, indeed, rubbish to look at. He felt crushed. Oh, that the good woman had not persuaded him to buy flowers, but had permitted him to carry the money home to his mother! He turned his feet in the direction of the dark court which nightly swallowed him up. The hungry feeling he had experienced hours ago had quite gone, but the heat, combined with his intense anxiety, had made him very thirsty. His lips were almost peeling with drought; so that, when he came beside the hackney-carriage stand, he was fain to kneel down and take a drink from one of the horse buckets. While in the act, the man whose business it was to water the horses, stepped softly up behind, and, with a drive, sent his head to the very bottom of the pail, splashing the water down his neck, and all over his flowers. Snatching up his basket-lid, the alarmed boy started to his feet and ran out of the fellow's reach.

"Oh dear! oh dear!" he could not help crying, "everybody is against me." Poor fellow! tears were once again in his eyes, as he resumed his journey homeward. Presently he took a rueful glance at his goods. They were very wet. He gave them, bunch by bunch, a gentle shake, when he could not help observing that they were slightly improved in appearance. Of course: the water had done them good. A new idea occurred to him. He hid to the nearest drinking fountain. At its foot was a basin for dogs to lap from. Herein the stems of the flowers were carefully set, and their owner for an hour kept watch and ward while they partook of the nourishment for which they had so long been asking. At the end of that space, they had so thoroughly revived as to look almost as well as when they had come into his possession. With a smile once again on his lip, and a sparkle in his eye, Maurice started for the railway terminus, and with lusty voice began to cry, "Who'll buy my flowers?"

In about a quarter of an hour from his first sale, who should come along but the young man who had called his flowers rubbish awhile back. Maurice stood aside, but the other made up, and pleasantly said, "I'll take a couple of bunches of your flowers now. I was sorry to see you so affected by what I said, when you stopped me in the City, and I looked for you as I returned a few minutes afterwards, but you were gone." Then, glancing towards the basket lid, "But you don't mean to say these are the flowers I saw you with before?"

"Yes, sir; but they do look different, don't they?"

"They do, indeed, and so do you. Why, you are as much improved as they."

Maurice now told all about the treatment he had met

at the coach stand, and how he had turned to account the hint that the poor thirsty things had given him.

"Ah!" said the young man, "a little encouragement seems to have given them new life and you too. Now, as some small amends for my sharpness to you, I'll buy all you have left." With grateful thanks, Maurice handed over his stock, and with a hop-skip-and-a-jump, hurried towards home. He had not got more than fifty yards on his road, when whom should he plump upon but the little old woman he had met in the morning.

"Well, I need not ask what success you have met with," said she; "your eyes tell me that much."

"Yes," laughed he; "I've done as you said, and sold every bunch."

Of course he could not but relate to his benefactress the story of all his day's troubles.

"Now take your mother home one-fourth of your money, and keep the rest for trading with to-morrow. Good-bye, we shall meet again."

Maurice's mother was deeply moved at the conduct of the stranger, and impressed upon her son that if he saw her again to be sure and ask her where she lived, and tell her how much she esteemed the kindness she had shewn them. Our hero was at the market betimes the next morning, and succeeded in selling out before midday. In a brief space he quite established a connection. People were attracted to him from his cleanliness and modest bearing. Progress gave new life, and he was soon able to earn as much money in a day as his mother, at her best, had been able to do in half a week. The blessings attending her son's exertions were most grateful to the sick woman, and kept her from wholly sinking.

Maurice continued so hopeful and confident of his father returning some day, that, strange to say, in spite of the weeds she wore, his mother sometimes had transient flashes of belief in the possibility. It was very late in the autumn, and just as flowers were beginning to get scarce, that an event occurred of great importance to the poor family. One evening, as the flower-vendor stood beside a dark entry, counting his money to see how much profit he had made, suddenly he became aware of somebody crouching in a corner. It gave him a great start, for nobody was passing, and he really expected to be pounced upon and robbed of all he possessed. He stepped back, never taking his eyes off the figure, and was on the point of running away, when, with a deep groan, it rolled over on its side.

It was a middle-aged man, clad in old and discoloured garments. His face was thin and emaciated, his hands skinny and claw-like.

"Poor creature!" sighed he, "how bad he looks."

A gentleman came along, as he was debating what was best to be done.

"Oh! if you please, sir, I think here's a man ill," said he.

"What's that?" asked the other. Then glancing

down, he looked a little surprised. He stooped, and took hold of the prostrate one by the wrist. "You are right, my boy," he remarked, after a short pause; "this poor fellow is indeed ill. Here, run for some brandy." He began feeling in his pockets. "Bless me, I've no money, tut—tut—tut!"

"I have, sir!" cried Maurice, flying off. He was soon back again with the spirits.

In the meantime, several people had been attracted to the spot, and the gentleman, who proved to be a doctor, had got them to raise the body into a sitting posture. He now carefully introduced a little liquor between the sufferer's teeth, and after an interval of a few minutes the patient began to take longer breaths. A little more, and he opened his eyes. He seemed bewildered.

A chair having been procured, the sufferer was gently raised and seated upon it. Presently his power of speech returned, and the doctor asked one or two questions. Maurice, who had been elbowed on one side by the crowd, was as anxious to see and hear what was going on as anybody. For a long time he could not get near enough. By dint of great perseverance at last he did manage to wriggle a little closer. The sufferer's voice grew stronger, and at length the eager listener caught a couple of words. With a loud cry, he startled the whole crowd, and forcing a passage, flung his arms about the wayfarer's neck. He could not mistake the voice of his father.

The mariner was so altered from privation and sickness, that his own child had been unable to recognise him till he heard him speak. Again was the poor man smitten dumb; then came a flood of tears, and once more his tongue was loosed.

"Your mother?" he asked.

"Is at home, father," was the reply.

"Thank God! I must go to her."

He started upon his feet, but instantly sank back into the chair. He was not permitted to make a second attempt; Maurice having told where they resided, plenty of hands were ready to carry the poor sailor, chair and all, to her from whom he had so long been parted.

With commendable forethought, the delighted boy flew ahead to prepare his mother for the meeting. His own excitement frustrated his intentions, and nearly frightened the sick woman out of her senses.

Plunging into her presence, he exclaimed, "Dear mother, oh, such news!"

"My dear!" exclaimed the startled woman, "what is the matter?"

Out came the secret: "Father—father—father!—come back! I said he would. Ha! ha! ha! Father—mother—father!"

"God be praised! Where is he?"

Without waiting a reply, she hurried from the room and down-stairs. As she reached the passage, her husband arrived at the door. In an instant they were locked in each other's arms.

After awhile the doctor got his patient up-stairs, when, with strict injunctions that he should be kept perfectly quiet, and the greatest care exercised in the administration of the diet he would presently send, he took his departure. The reader shall not be kept in suspense as to the ultimate fate of the family. Under kind and careful treatment the sailor soon grew strong, and, as if from sheer sympathy, his ailing wife recovered also. Of course Maurice's father was delighted with his little daughter, and he always spoke of Maurice as his brave boy. The little old woman was rummaged out, and became their most constant visitor, as she had been their truest friend.

"THE QUIVER" BIBLE CLASS.

21. "The Son of Man."—This title of our Lord is used only once (excepting by himself) in the New Testament. By whom, and on what occasion?

22. It may truly be said that, during their forty years' journey through the wilderness, the children of Israel were, each one, clothed in a perpetual miracle. How so?

23. The Mount of Olives, now so blessedly associated with so many episodes in the life of our Lord, had once a very evil name. What was it?

24. A man who told his cousin he was her father's brother?

25. Who first discovered the existence of mules?

26. A heathen priest whose grandsons are frequently mentioned in Scripture?

27. A very old man—one of the oldest men since the flood—who was kind to a boy, who afterwards repaid his kindness by killing his son?

28. A king whose name meant "peaceable"?

29. A man, who although warned, invited his murderer to a feast?

ANSWERS.

10. Joshua (Numb. xi. 28).

11. The Jews (from his worn appearance) judged the Lord's age to be fifty (John viii. 57) when he was only thirty.

12. Zebulun (1 Chron. xii. 33).

13. King Jehoiachim, who was only eight years old, is said "to have done evil" (2 Chron. xxxvi. 9).

14. 1 Chron. xxi. 20.

15. Esth. xi. 7.

16. 1 Sam. ix. 13.

17. Uzziah (2 Chron. xxvi. 10).

18. Judges v. 29.

19. Jeremiah xxxiii. 1.

20. 1 Chron. xi. 22.